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*The Blessedness of the Merciful:*

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# SERMON

PREACHED before the

SONS of the CLERGY,

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY-MEETING

IN THE

Cathedral-Church of St PAUL

April 14, 1743.

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By EDWARD COBDEN, D.D.

Arch-Deacon of London, and Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty.

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MEMORIAL

OF THE

ANNIVERSARY

OF THE



BY

AND

OF THE

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The Most Reverend the Lord Arch-Bishop of *York*,

The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of *St Asaph*,

The Rev. JOHN TAYLOR, D. D. | The Rev. THO. TANNER, M. A.

The Rev. JOHN CHAPMAN, D. D. | The Rev. SILV. VINCENT, M. A.

The Rev. FR. FURSMAN, M. A. | The Rev. WILL. LLOYD, M. A.

The Rev. G. MADDOCKS, M. A. | JOHN PROBYN, Esq;

The Rev. JOSEPH CROW, M. A. | JOSEPH WILCOX, Esq;

STEWARDS for the SONS of the CLERGY.

This SERMON, preached and printed at  
their Request,

Is, with all Respect and Humility, in-  
scribed by

*Their most obedient Servant,*

EDWARD COBDEN.

OT

The NAB reported the Lord Archibald of 1944.

The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of St. Asaph.

The Rev. J. Taylor, D. D., The Rev. The Tanner, M. A.

THE REV. ST. VINCENT, M. A.

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## MATTH. V. 7.

*Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy.*

**T**HE Duty contained in these Words, comes here recommended to us with the greatest Force and Energy: Whether we reflect upon the Person who requires it at our Hands, or the Beauty and Goodness of the Duty itself. The Person who delivered this Doctrine, and gave us this Precept, was no other than our blessed Saviour; who, while he delivered it, was the highest Instance, and the noblest Example of it, that the Imagination of Man can possibly frame. That the Son of God, who had from all Eternity dwelt in Happiness, not to be expressed, in Glory not to be conceived, should, in pure Compassion to the Miseries of Mankind, divest himself of all that Glory and Happiness, bow the Heavens and come down among us, and subject himself to all the Infirmities which attend our Nature, to all the Miseries and Reproaches which befall the lowest and vilest Condition of Mortals, to rescue us from Sin and Folly, from Death and Damnation;

Damnation; this is such unbounded Goodness, such infinite Compassion, as at the same Time cannot but warm our Affections with the utmost Gratitude, and fill our Thoughts with the greatest Wonder and Astonishment.

If we consider likewise the Duty itself, such is its Beauty, such is its Amiability, such is its Goodness; that could we be persuaded to the general Practice of it, we should scarce need any other to make us all easy and happy. Could we be prevailed upon to express our Tenderness and Compassion one towards another, in all the several Instances of it, and as our respective Necessities require; what a delightful Situation should we be in, and what a Heaven should we see upon Earth? And surely, nothing more need be said in Commendation of a Duty, than that the universal Observance of it would be productive of the Happiness of Mankind. Nor does it redound a little to the Honour and Advantage of our Religion, that, if it is not singular in commanding it, yet it undoubtedly carries it to a nobler Height, insists more earnestly on the Necessity of it, recommends it to us upon better Principles, from greater Encouragements, and by more eminent Examples, than any other Religion can pretend to: And if Infidels could by any Means lay aside their Prejudices, Christianity so much inculcating this single Duty, might be sufficient to convince them

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them of the Truth and Goodness, and win them over to the Profession and Practice of it.

*Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy.*

I shall, in my Discourse upon these Words, *First*, Shew you the Nature of this Grace, and then the Motives to obtain it. First shew who those are that may be stiled merciful, and then endeavour to persuade you to become such, And, *Lastly*, I shall apply the whole to this Method of Charity we are met together to encourage.

I. The Merciful, in a religious Sense, are such as, out of a real Love to God, and sincere Obedience to his Commands, entertain a hearty Compassion for the Miseries and Wants of their Brethren, both of Soul and Body; and who from thence, to the utmost of their Abilities, are excited to supply and relieve them. They consider the great Obligations they have to their Creator, not only in bestowing on them a Being, not only in forming them out of the Dust, and breathing in them a living Soul, not only in endowing them with Sense, Reason, and Understanding, and raising them to a State of Dignity and Authority over the rest of this lower Creation: but when they had justly forfeited all the Blessings to which they were designed, and for which they were created, and had incurred the Sentence of Death that was threatened



threatened to their Disobedience; then likewise in contriving such stupendous Methods for their Redemption, as to send his Son into the World to suffer in their Stead, and moreover to purchase for them an everlasting State of Happiness.

The Merciful, I say, are such as considering, and seriously laying to Heart, the great Love of God to Mankind, expressed in so many wonderful Instances of it: In Imitation of this Divine Example, endeavour to be merciful as he is merciful; conceiving a general Benevolence to all who are stamp'd with the same Image, and being desirous to relieve them from all the Miseries under which they labour, and all the Wants with which they are surrounded.

Are any of them involved in Difficulties, out of which they are unable to extricate themselves? The merciful Man stands ready to lend his helping Hand, is an universal Friend, a Guardian Angel to them in their Distress, and contributes all his Interest and Power for their Succour and Relief. Are any afflicted with Poverty, by some fatal Accident, or some inevitable Misfortune, reduced to the lowest Ebb, and destitute of the common Comforts and Conveniences of Life? He tenderly sympathizes with them, and with open Hand and Heart, endeavours to raise them from their fallen Estate. He clothes the Naked, feeds the Hungry, and gives Drink  
to



to the Thirsty. He is Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame. Are any afflicted with Pains and Infirmities of Body, with Sickness and Distempers, the Attendants on frail Mortality? He, with the good *Samaritan*, pours in Oil and Wine, directs them with his Counsel, and Succours them with his Bounty. Are any unjustly aspersed in their Character, and wounded in their Reputation by the envenomed Arrows of a malicious Tongue? He is inclined to think and believe the best. He is sufficiently sensible how tender a Part they are injured in, and how uneasy a Thing it is to a virtuous Mind, to labour under a Load of undeserved Infamy, and for that Reason endeavours to detect the Falshood of the Accusation, to make their Innocence as clear as the Light, and their just Dealing as the Noon-Day. Thus kind and compassionate is he to his Brethren under any temporal Misfortunes that may befall them.

But if they are afflicted with any spiritual Evils, if their Souls are in Danger through any Ignorance of what is good, or any Inclination to what is bad, through any Doubts or Weakness, through any Presumption or Despair. He, in this Case, reflecting on the Value of their immortal Souls, and the extreme Danger of a Miscarriage, is ever ready, to the best of his Power, to instruct and guide them in the Way they should go, by wise Counsel and meek Reproof to dissuade them

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from Folly. He is not afraid to check them in their Vices, though by it he should incur their Displeasure; nor does he prize their Friendship at the Expence of their Salvation. He is ever willing to resolve the Scruples of the Uncertain, to animate the Faint under their Difficulties, and to inspire the Feeble with Courage and Resolution to maintain a good Conscience, to be stedfast and unmoveable in the Paths of Virtue and Piety, *always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as he knows their Labour will not be in vain in the Lord.*

Should he, notwithstanding all these good Offices he is ready to do to Mankind, notwithstanding this universal Benevolence he is zealous to express upon all Occasions, meet with but ungrateful Requitals in Return to his Kindness; should he be censured and reviled for the noblest Acts of Charity, and meet with the utmost Injuries and Abuses which Cunning can contrive, or Malice pursue him with, as our blessed Saviour, and many Saints and Martyrs have experienced before him; he still, in Imitation of such Divine Examples, goes on unwearied in doing Good to those who least deserve it. He pities their ill Nature, and pardons all their Mischief; and if he finds he can make no Impression on them any other Way, he then likewise applies himself to the Throne of Grace, and begs of God to inspire them  
with

with better Minds, and qualify them for Blessings they are too insensible of.

Such is the Temper and Disposition of the Merciful. And that we may attain to this heavenly Disposition, I proceed in the

II. Next Place, to lay before you the Motives and Encouragements to it.

The First I shall mention is the Excellency of it.

Anger, Hatred, and Envy, are *mean* and *poor*, as well as *brutish* Passions, and arise from an Impotence and Weakness of Spirit: But Mercy and Compassion are *noble* and *generous* Principles, and discover an exalted Mind, and a Greatness of Soul. They proceed from Love and Charity, which is the greatest of all Christian Graces. I deny not indeed, that a Tenderness to ourselves, and a Reflection that we are liable to the same Misfortunes, may often have a Share in the Compassion which arises toward the Miserable. But how many great and generous Souls are there, who entertain a hearty Concern for the Afflictions of others, which were they themselves under, they would undervalue and despise? Heroes may be admired for their Courage and Fortitude in facing Danger, and hazarding their Lives without Fear or Concern: but it is their rescuing the Oppressed, and delivering them from Tyranny and Bondage, and their conquering themselves in forgiving their Enemies,



that shines with greatest Lustre in their Histories. And the most renowned Worthies we meet with in former Times, are more celebrated for their Kindness and Tenderneſs expressed to their Enemies when under their Power, than for the Victories which reduced them to that Condition. It is an Instance of Bravery perhaps to be exempt from Fear; but when that Bravery is employed in ravaging Countries, and destroying the Lives of Millions, who can read such Actions without Horror and Indignation? But when we see a glorious Leader, who has the Good of Mankind at Heart, and desires Danger only for the Happiness of his Fellow-Creatures: This is truly great and noble, our Affections go along with him, he has our entire Applause, and we can't help wishing that Success and Victory may attend those Ensigns which are displayed in the Cause of Liberty and Safety. This is to resemble the Fountain of Honour, the great and glorious Being, *whose Mercy is over all his Works*; who is perpetually showering down his Blessings on the World, and holds forth Supplies for all the Wants and Necessities of his Creatures. *Be as a Father to the Fatherless, and instead of a Husband unto your Mother\*, so shalt thou be as the Son of the most High, and he shall love thee more than thy Mother doth. He sends his Rain on the Just and Unjust; and though*

\* Eccclus. iv. 10;



though he meets with the utmost Ingratitude for all his inestimable Blessings, yet *he forgiveth all our Sin, and healeth all our Infirmity.* To rescue us from our Sins and Miseries, and preserve us from Danger, is the constant Employment of those blessed Spirits, who are sent out to minister to them who are Heirs of Salvation. 'Twas out of boundless Compassion to our lost Estate, and to recover us from it, that the Son of God came down from the Regions of Bliss and Glory, and was subject to all the Miseries and Afflictions of human Life. And as this brought down God from Heaven, so does it raise Man up to it. This is so excellent a Grace, that it is the Sum and Perfection of all Duty; according to the Apostle's Reasoning; *Love, says he, thinketh no ill to his Neighbour, therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* The Scriptures sometimes advance farther. For Love and Mercy not only thinketh no ill to its Neighbour, but thinketh, desireth, and endeavoureth all the Good it can. This indeed both crowns and consecrates all our other Gifts and Perfections. For when our Knowledge is employed in instructing the Ignorance, clearing the Doubts, and rectifying the Follies of Mankind, in *converting Sinners from the Error of their Ways, and saving Souls from Death*, then is it employed to the Purpose for which it was intended, and becomes truly valuable. When our Power is exercised in protecting  
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insulted Innocence, in defending the Cause of the Helpless, and raising the Afflicted from their Sorrow and Despair; this gives it a Lustre more than that of Crowns and Diadems. When our Riches are expended in feeding the Hungry, cloathing the Naked, in purchasing Comfort for the Sick, and redeeming Captives out of Slavery and Imprisonment, then are they put out to the noblest Use, and will return into our Bosoms with the most gainful Interest. But without Love, and Goodness, and Compassion, all our Knowledge, Wealth, and Power, will but render us more like Devils, and Talents which have been committed to our Trust, will but increase our Damnation.

Another Recommendation of Mercy is, that it is suitable to our Nature. There needs no other Demonstration, that the God of Nature designed Men for Society, and the mutual Support and Assistance of each other, than that Sympathy he has implanted in the human Breast. We no sooner see another miserable, but we make his Case our own; we share with him in his Afflictions, and 'tis a Kindness and Ease to ourselves to administer to his Relief. \* *The merciful Man doth Good to his own Soul, but he that is cruel troubleth his own Flesh.* And although some Persons, by repeated Acts of Barbarity, may have so hardened their Hearts, as to be Proof against any

any Sense of others Misfortunes, nay, so as to take Delight in afflicting and oppressing those under their Power, yet are they looked upon as Monsters of their Kind, and are degenerated into Brutes and Savages. Compassion is congenial to us, and those tender Impressions which are given us by the Hand of Nature, are not without Difficulty erased. Whether that be true or no, which some curious Persons have observed, that when we see a Man wounded in any particular Part, our Blood and Animal Spirits immediately fly to that Part of ourselves, and give us some Proportion of that Pain under which the other labours; as the String of one Harp touched is answered by the same String in another. This is certain, that the Concern enters our Bosoms, and our Hearts are sensibly touched and affected by it.

That it is so agreeable to our Nature, is sufficient to manifest the next Motive to it I propose to mention, which is the Delightfulness of it.

For every Thing is pleasant that is agreeable to our Nature. But beside the Pleasure we receive in giving Scope to that Compassion which is natural to us, and which will not suffer us to be at Ease, till we have afforded all reasonable Assistance to the Miserable, which is a Satisfaction we enjoy as Men: There is a greater, we reap from it as Christians, from the Consciousness of discharging  
our



our Duty in those fundamental Branches of it, the Love of God and our Neighbour. \* *For whoſo hath this Worlds Goods and ſeeth his Brother have need, and ſhutteth up his Bowels of Compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* Hereby likewise we have a comfortable Assurance that we are the Children of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in us. For as the Apostle immediately adds, *Hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and ſhall aſſure our Hearts before him.* Upon theſe Accounts, that Saying of our Saviour is ſufficiently verified, *It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.* The Benefactor who relieves the Poor and Miſerable, receives more Benefit than the Perſon who is relieved. For as he ſhares with him in the ſenſible Eaſe he gives him, ſo has he ſeveral additional Comforts in his own Mind and Conſcience. The Pleaſure of indulging our Appetites, or gratifying our ſenſual Paſſions, is not worthy to be compared with that of relieving a miſerable Object upon true Chriſtian Principles. This is a Feaſt to the Conſcience, and the higheſt Entertainment of a rational Mind, pleaſed with the Reflections of having imitated the moſt amiable Perfections of the Divine Nature.

The Satisfaction here, as it is *pure* and *unſullied*, ſo is it *laſting* and *permanent*, and affords a comfortable Relief under a Man's own Misfortunes.

\* 1 John iii. 17.



Misfortunes. \* *Blessed is he that considereth the Poor; the Lord will deliver him in the Time of Trouble; the Lord will strengthen him upon the Bed of Languishing, thou wilt make all his Bed in his Sickness.* He will then, in the Day of his Distress, with Comfort and Chearfulness, reflect upon the Acts of Mercy and Kindness he has shewn to his Brethren; and every Instance of his Compassion will refresh his Mind with Joy and Gladness. When with holy Job he can say, in his Affliction, † *When the Ear heard me, it blessed me; and when the Eye saw me, it gave Witness to me, because I delivered the Poor that cried, and the Fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the Widow's Heart to sing for Joy. I put on Righteousness and it clothed me: My Judgment was as a Robe and a Diadem.* With what unspeakable Comfort may such a one reflect on the former Stages of his Travels? With what joyful Assurance may he anticipate the glorious Prospect that is opening upon him?

Thus blessed is the merciful Man from the Comfort and Satisfaction the Exercise of his Mercy gives him, even in *this Life*: But above all, blessed is he in that Reward he will meet with in *another*. *Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy.* They shall obtain it at the Hands of God, when they appear be-  
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\* Psal. xli. 1, 3.

† Job xxix. 11, 12, 13, 14.

fore him in the Day of Judgment : Then the least Act of Kindness, shewn to their Brethren in this World, will not be forgotten, or disregarded. No, it will be mentioned to their exceeding Comfort, and their everlasting Honour. Thus in the Account our blessed Saviour gives of the Proceſs of that important Day. \* *Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his Right-Hand, Come ye bleſſed Children of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World. For I was an hungred and ye gave me Meat : I was thirſty and ye gave me Drink : I was a Stranger and ye took me in : Naked and ye cloathed me : I was ſick and ye viſited me : I was in Priſon and ye came unto me.* And when they modestly decline their Praises, and question how they could do him ſuch Service, he answers: *Verily, I ſay unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

From this Account, given by our blessed Saviour himself, who is to be the Judge of Quick and Dead, and therefore could not but know what Plea would avail at his own Tribunal, one would almost conclude, that no other Actions, but those of Mercy, were to be considered, and hardly any other Grace, but that of Charity, were to be rewarded. But however false ſuch an Inference may be, thus  
much

much is certainly to be depended on, that Mercy and Charity will be of singular Service to us at that Day. And we may humbly presume, that many Omissions of our Duty will be wink'd at, many Imperfections and Frailties of our Nature over-look'd, many of our Sins of Ignorance pardoned, through his All-sufficient Merits on that Account. Those who have been compassionate themselves, will find it recompensed to them, in the Compassion of their Judge. The Love they have shewn to his afflicted Members on Earth, the Expressions of Kindness and Tenderness to their suffering Brethren, will be looked upon with an Eye of Indulgence, and find many Grains of Allowance. He will openly rehearse them, before Men and Angels, and graciously impute them as done to himself. Saying, *Inasmuch as ye have done it, unto the least of my Brethren, ye have done it unto me.* A Sentence we should continually have before our Eyes, and ever deeply imprinted on our Hearts; and if it does not inspire us with Compassion, we must lay aside our Pretences to Christianity. We could sometimes, perhaps, wish with ourselves that it had been our Lot to have conversed with our Saviour upon Earth; to have entertained him as *Martha*; to have discoursed with him as *Mary*; or, with *Magdalene*, to have wiped his Feet with the Hair of our Head: And from thence, no Doubt, should have entertained Hopes of



his Favour, when he came again in Glory. Lo! what we wish for we have in our Power. We may refresh him and relieve him, in the Poor and Afflicted, his Representatives here below. And what kind Offices we shew to his suffering Members, will stand us in as much Stead, as if we had relieved and comforted him, in his Passage to Mount *Calvary*. When any miserable Object demands your Pity, and pleads for your Bounty, remember 'tis your blessed Saviour entreats it at your Hands; and whatsoever Kindness you express, on such Occasions, he will abundantly repay you. Let it be your Care to persevere in doing Good, and to crown your Faith, and other Virtues, with the Graces of Mercy and Beneficence, and your Labour of Love will not be in vain in the Lord. You will have it made up to you, in the Pardon of your Sins, the Favour of God, and eternal Glory and Happiness.

III. So various and so pressing are the Arguments, that recommend to us these exalted Graces of Mercy and Charity, that it would require the Eloquence of Men and Angels sufficiently to display them. And, for ever blessed be the Divine Majesty, that there are so many among us, upon whom these important Considerations seem to have their proper Influence! When we seriously reflect on those prodigious Impieties, with which the Anger of  
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of Almighty God is continually provoked, we cannot but be, in some Measure, astonished, that the Sentence of utter Desolation is not yet pronounced, upon a Nation, so loose in Principles, and so abandoned in Morals. Far be it from us to pretend to fathom the Counsels of Heaven. But we can hardly think of any Thing that should stop the Sword of Vengeance, and suspend its Execution, except the various Methods of Charity, so zealously promoted by some generous and exalted Souls among us. Charities, so liberal and diffusive, that one would wonder from what secret Sources they could possibly be so well supplied; and be apt to impute it to the Hand that replenished the Widow's Cruise of Oil. The many Hospitals and Infirmaries of every Kind. The Societies for the Propagation of the Gospel, the promoting Christian Knowledge, the Reformation of Manners, and the Augmentation of small Livings: The numerous Schools of Charity for the Education of poor Children; beside continual private Charities, requiring a Fund, I had almost said, equal to what is squandered away in our Vanities and Follies. Would to God a Sense of our common Danger would excite us all to Repentance, and that we would prevent our Ruin, by a general Reformation! But since this is hardly to be hoped for, without some extraordinary Interposition of Providence, may it please the Divine Goodness, still to continue

time a Remnant, who may stand in the Gap,  
 and, by the Piety of their Intercessions, ap-  
 pease his Anger, and whose liberal Benefactions  
 we may consider as so many Pledges for the  
 Safety of our Country. May more and more  
 pious and generous Souls arise to support  
 these Foundations, which have been so wisely  
 contrived, by our Predecessors, in this Labour  
 of Love. Among which, as there are none  
 conducted with a more disinterested Fidelity,  
 so I am persuaded there are none of greater  
 Necessity and Excellence, than this we are  
 now assembled to promote. For when a  
 Clergyman receives his final Summons, and  
 leaves a Family helpless and unprovided, upon  
 the slender Thread of whose Life their *Little*  
*All* depended, a more dismal Scene of Distress  
 can hardly be pictured to our Imagination.  
 They appear to be in as deplorable a Condi-  
 tion as the Companions of St *Paul* were,  
 when their Provision was cast over board, and  
 they expected every Moment to be swallowed  
 up by the Waves. Whither, alas! shall the  
 disconsolate Widow, with her tender Retinue,  
 flee for Succour, when she is expell'd, as ex-  
 pell'd she must be, from her Habitation?  
 Her Case seems to resemble that of *Hagar*,  
 (only commonly with more Weights to her  
 Affliction) when \* *she wandered in the Wilder-*  
*ness, and the Water was spent in the Bottle,*  
*and she cast the Child under one of the Shrubs,*  
*and*

\* Gen. xxi. 14, &c.

and she sat down over-against him, and lift up her Voice and wept. And like Hagar, she would be in Danger of sinking under the Agonies of Despair, did not you, my Brethren, resembling the good Angel, point out to her, the Well for her Relief. I shall not undertake to vindicate the Conduct of all my Brethren, in this Particular, who sometimes I fear, breed up their Children above their Circumstances, and live, as if what they possess were an *Inheritance*. But since *secular Wisdom* is not always the distinguishing Property of a *faithful Pastor*, since it is too much expected that he live in a free hospitable Manner, *whatever* his Income be, if he would either preserve his Reputation or maintain his Power of doing Good with his Flock; and since the Children are no Way answerable for the Parent's Conduct, a small Share of that Charity, *which covers the Faults of others*, will excuse the Frailty on the one Side, and relieve the Necessity consequential to it on the other. But, alas! it is very well known that the Income of many of the Clergy, when managed with the utmost Frugality, is not sufficient to raise a competent Provision for their Families. The Duty of their Function, in the mean Time, restraining them from increasing it by any mechanic Arts, or laborious Employments. Several are impoverished by the with-holding their Dues by Violence and Injustice, which, I believe, is more frequently practised



practised upon the Clergy, and more quietly submitted to, by them, than perhaps any other Body of Men. And, should they endeavour to vindicate their Right, which, in Duty they may sometimes think themselves obliged to, then the heavy Expences of a Law-Suit are enough to sink them at once. Others are brought into Difficulties by their very Inclination to Learning, and the Charge of furnishing a Study for their Improvement in Knowledge : Where Circumstances are narrow, a small Collection of useful Books is a very expensive Article, and a Furniture continually sinking in its Value. Integrity and Conscience, which are the noblest Ornaments to recommend them, keep others back from Honour ; and a Spirit superior to unworthy Compliances is often a dead Weight upon them in their Road to Preferment. Many Men of shining and uncommon Merits are confined to a starving Pittance for Life, because they refuse to run into the Error of Balaam for Reward. And pardon them, I beseech ye, if some, while they are persuading to Mercy and Charity, the greatest of all Christian Graces, are carried, by the Strength of their own Arguments, to put them in Practice, even beyond their Power ; and while they are easing the immediate Calamities of others, are forgetful of the future, if not present Wants of themselves and their Families, relying upon those Promises of Protection in Scripture,

Scripture, which they, who are possessed of Abilities, are the Trustees, appointed by Providence to fulfil. Were the Clergy of our Church generally of the Temper of the Priest and *Levite*, described in the Gospel, and when the wounded Traveller implored their Assistance, past by, without Remorse, on the other Side, Compassion, even for their innocent Children, might be pleaded with less Assurance. But the Reverse of this, God be thanked, is so evident, that in Proportion to their Circumstances (without any Abatement for the Uncertainty of their Tenure) in Works of Mercy and Charity, they need not be ashamed of any Comparison. They are not only Advocates for it, from the Pulpit, but leading Examples of it in their Lives and Conversation.

These few Reflections I have mentioned, are sufficient to shew the *Necessity* of this Method of Beneficence; I am now recommending: And there are not wanting Considerations which demonstrate the *peculiar Excellency* of it. For if we are required to do Good to all Men, especially to them who are of the *Houshold of Faith*, who profess the same Religion, and are Partakers with us of the same Sacraments; much more is it required that we supply the Wants of their Families, who are, or have been *faithful Stewards in this Houshold*, and Dispensers of those Holy Mysteries, and to whom a distinguished Kindness

and Regard is due. Whose unwearied Care to provide Meat for the spiritual Necessities of their Flock, and attending continually upon this very Thing, has been the Occasion that they have made but little temporal Provision for their own Dependants. A Prophet's Reward will, in some Measure, belong to those generous Benefactors, who contribute to support their helpless Children, on the Account of that Relation. For in Proportion to what Relief they give the Pastor from his worldly Concerns and Troubles, so much they leave him more at Liberty to attend the proper Duties of his Calling. So that by supporting his Family, they in some Measure promote the Preaching of the Gospel, and may be said to edify and instruct Mankind in the Christian Religion. Hence you perceive this is a Compassion to the Souls of many, as well as to the Bodies of some. And here Piety and Charity shine out together with united Rays, when what is bestowed eases the Cares of those who wait at the Altar, and contributes to maintain the Influence and Credit of Religion.

It was doubtless a Concern for the Honour of Religion, as well as a Compassion for the low Estate of its Ministers, which excited that merciful Queen, whose Memory ought to be ever dear to us, to that unparalleled Act of Bounty in bestowing the first Fruits and Tenths for the Augmentation of poorer Livings. This we may deservedly say was the  
greatest



greatest Glory of a Reign that was full of Triumphs, and a Glory in which Fortune could claim no Share. For which we should be ungrateful if we refused her the Tributes of our Acknowledgments, as often as this annual Solemnity returns. It becomes us at this Time, to strow fresh Flowers on her Grave, and celebrate her eminent Virtues; among which will be recorded, in the Annals of Time, (as long as this and other Monuments of her Piety shall stand) her tender Concern for the Happiness of her People, and her unwearied Zeal for the Honour of God. Nor ought we to be ungrateful to the Memory of that Prince, whom we justly celebrate as the Founder of this Corporation: Nor of his late Majesty, who both enlarged this Foundation by his Power, and encouraged it by his Bounty. We likewise commemorate, with Gratitude, our late gracious *Queen Caroline*, among the Number of those who have done us Honour by their Benefactions. And indeed, did Princes and Potentates consider how much the Throne is upholden by Mercy, how much it ennobles their Character, how it endears them both to Heaven and Earth, and stamps upon them a double Image of him whose Vicegerents they are; as they surpass others in the Means and Power of doing Good, so they would endeavour to excel them in the actual Exercise of Beneficence. This would render them as good as they are great, would present them

with that true and solid Satisfaction which is not to be found in any Pleasures or Possessions of this World, and secure to them an immortal Crown, when these earthly Kingdoms shall be no more.

But to return: While we recount with Pleasure the Favours of these royal Examples, it becomes us not to be altogether unmindful of others, though of a lower Sphere. Particularly of one very munificent Benefactor \*, who opened a large Fountain for our Relief, by increasing the *Levite's* Patrimony.

And another † of our own Order, who, though *unmarried* himself, poured a very plentiful Stream into this thirsty Channel, and by that Means became as a *Husband to many of these Widows, and a Father to many of these Orphans* ||. These were *merciful Men, the Glory of their Times, and their Righteousness shall not be forgotten*. They have let their *Light shine before Men*, and we who have seen and felt *their good Works, ought to glorify our Father which is in Heaven*, for such Instruments of his providential Care to the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction.

As for those whom we cannot commemorate, who *have done their Alms so as not to be seen of Men*, who have conveyed their Gifts by such secret Channels to this *Corban*, that the Fountain from whence they flowed is not to be discovered: We doubt not but they have already been in some Measure rewarded by the

Approbation

\* Mr Colston of Bristol.

† Dr Turner.

|| Ibid.

Approbation of their own Conscience, which is beyond all the Applauses this World can give; and that they will be more fully *recompenced at the Resurrection of the Just, when their Father, who seeth in Secret will reward them openly.*

By Way of Conclusion give me leave to mention one Argument more, without which even this Solemnity may be thought to want some Vindication, as the very Occasion of it has been made a Handle of Reproach. For our Adversaries of the Church of *Rome* are too ready to reflect upon the Poverty of these helpless Orphans, as a Blemish to the Reformation. The Zeal and Learning of our Clergy have solidly confuted *every other Objection* from that Quarter. And although this be too trifling to be seriously replied to by Way of Argument; yet a very proper Way of answering it would be, to take away the Foundation of it by a liberal Supply to their Necessities. Let us then confute them in this *more excellent Way.* Let their *uncharitable Censures* provoke us to a more *charitable Beneficence*; and excite us either to augment the Livings of the *Fathers*, or to make what Provision we can for their *indigent Children.* For it is great Pity, that, while the Clergy of this Church are, for their *Piety and Learning, the Glory of the Reformation,* either they or their Children should be any *Reproach* to it by their *Want and Poverty.*

POSTSCRIPT.



# POSTSCRIPT.

*The following Calculation drawn up by an accurate Hand, is very fit to accompany the Sermons upon this Occasion.*

**T**HE Governors of the Royal Bounty are now empowered to augment all Livings, not exceeding 50 *l. per Annum*. And the Number of Livings following have been certified to be capable of Augmentation.

1071 Livings not exceeding 10 <i>l. per Ann.</i> may be augmented with the Bounty only, six Times each, pursuant to the present Rules of the Governors, which will amount to 6426 Augmentations.	}	6426

1467 Livings above 10, and not exceeding 20 <i>l. per Ann.</i> may be augmented four Times each, which will make 5868 Augmentations.	}	5868

1126 Livings above 20, and not exceeding 30 <i>l. per Ann.</i> may be augmented three Times each, which will make 3378 Augmentations.	}	3378

1049

1049 Livings above 30, and not exceeding 40 *l. per Ann.* may be augmented twice each, which will make 2098 Augmentations. } 2098

884 Livings above 40, and not exceeding 50 *l. per Ann.* may be each once augmented, which will make 884 Augmentations. } 884

5597 Total Number of Augmentations, which may be made (by the Bounty alone) before the Livings already certified, will exceed 50 *l. per Annum* each. } 18654

The clear Account of the Bounty is computed (*communibus annis*) to make fifty-five Augmentations yearly: So that by the Bounty alone, it must be 339 Years from the Year 1714, (which was the first Year in which any Livings were augmented) before all the small Livings already certified, can exceed 50 *l. per Annum*.

*Note,* In this Calculation, the several Livings not exceeding 10 *l. per Ann.* are all computed at 10 *l. per Ann.* and so on to 20, 30, 40, 50. which, in the Course of Augmentations, will add considerably to the Number of Years

Years abovementioned, before the Purpose designed by the Royal Bounty can be compleated: And beside, there are many more Livings capable of Augmentation, which have not yet been certified.

*Note*, 18654 Augmentations being to be made by the Bounty alone, before the Livings already certified, will amount to above 50 *l. per Annum* each; if it be computed that one half of such Augmentations may be made in Conjunction with Benefactors, it will then require 226 Years before the Livings already certified will exceed 50 *l. per Annum*.

*Vid.* Dr *Lavington's* Sermon from whence this is extracted.

F I N I S.



E R R A T A:

**P**AGE 11. Line 20. read *that* instead of *the*, Page 12. Line 14. read *desires* instead of *desires*. Line 28. read *their* instead of *your*. Page 14. Line 14. read *and these distinguishing Talents*.